

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY
TO THE VIRGINIA BOARD OF EDUCATION

JAMES MONROE BUILDING, JEFFERSON CONFERENCE ROOM
22ND FLOOR
JUNE 5, 2007
10:00 A.M.

MINUTES

Members Present

Dr. Gary Jones (Chairperson)
Dr. Yvonne Brandon
Dr. Cynthia Cooper
Ms. Barbara Gibson
Mr. Steve Clementi
Dr. Bonnie Moore
Ms. Betty Mullins
The Honorable Ken Plum
Ms. Susan Utt
Ms. Jackie Venable

Not Present

Mr. Scott Leath
Dr. David Red
The Honorable Emmett Hanger

DOE Staff Present

Dr. Linda Wallinger
Ms. Elizabeth Hawa
Mr. Shannon Beasley
Ms. Debbie Bergtholdt
Dr. Mike Nusbaum
Mr. Randy Stamper
Ms. Gloria Murphy

Guests

Dr. Troilen Seward (Lobbyist, Virginia
Association of Adult and Continuing
Education)
Ms. Sarah Herzog, Senate Finance
Committee

Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the November 1, 2006 meeting were approved.

Office of Adult Education and Literacy Update

Elizabeth Hawa gave a brief report on the following topics:

- Grant programs for 2007-2008;
- U. S. Department of Education audit of the adult education program and the approval of the corrective action plan;
- Department of Planning and Budget audit of the Race to GED program;
- Adult education content standards development;
- Distance Learning Center at VCU; and
- Policy manual being developed for local and regional programs.

Subcommittee Reports

Dr. Jones requested that the chairs of the subcommittees provide summaries of their reports and recommendations to the Advisory Committee.

Early Childhood Subcommittee

Subcommittee Members: Ms. Barbara Gibson, Chair, The Honorable Ken Plum,
Dr. Yvonne Brandon, Ms. Betty Mullins, and
Mr. Randall Stamper

Ms. Gibson outlined the connection between parental education and income levels and children's educational success, citing a recent issue of *Education Week* magazine that identified several indicators of child success in the United States. Based on this information, the Early Childhood Subcommittee recommended the formation of a "center of excellence" that would provide training, resources, and technical assistance to school divisions, public and private pre-schools, and community volunteers that would support family literacy practices integrated into pre-K and elementary classrooms. Implementation of such a center and its training plan would take place over a five-year period, with progressive, targeted implementation in areas of the state identified as having the greatest needs. The cost of staffing and program administration for such a center of excellence was estimated at \$400,000 per year over five years.

The committee discussed details of such a center and how areas would be targeted for service delivery.

ESOL Subcommittee

Subcommittee Members: Dr. David Red, Chair, Mr. Scott Leath, and Ms. Nancy Faux (Mr. Randall Stamper delivered the subcommittee report in Dr. Red's absence.)

Mr. Stamper summarized the growing need for effective and widely available instruction in English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) in the Commonwealth of Virginia. Nearly half of all adult learners who receive state-funded adult education services in Virginia are receiving English language instruction. The growing population of adult learners in need of these services, coupled with a shortage of well-trained teachers and tutors and the high attrition rate among them, suggests that the Board of Education should support efforts to expand the pool of qualified ESOL teachers and volunteer instructional assistants.

The subcommittee recommended the funding of a statewide series of trainings that would prepare volunteer classroom assistants to help ESOL teachers confront the varying needs of ESOL learners. This training would be divided into two modules – one for retired teachers who wish to volunteer and one for volunteers with no previous teaching experience. The trainings would be delivered using the "train-the-trainer" model. A team of expert ESOL trainers would deliver training and materials to local coordinators, who would then deliver the training and materials to the local volunteer classroom assistants.

Cost for the development and delivery of the training and materials was estimated at \$30,000 per year over two years.

Questions about the need for teacher training were addressed, and Mr. Stamper explained that the committee's report was aimed at a fiscally manageable plan that could have immediate positive impact on the need for ESOL services.

Individual Student Alternative Education Plan (ISAEF) Subcommittee

Subcommittee Members: Dr. Cynthia Cooper, Chair, Mr. Steve Clementi,
The Honorable Emmett Hanger, and
Dr. Michael Nusbaum

Dr. Cooper outlined the background of the ISAEF program, funding trends, and data related to program success across the state. Access to ISAEF services, the formula for fund distribution, and the impact upon school divisions' Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) of ISAEF students earning the Certificate of General Education Development (GED) were identified as key areas of concern.

The current formula for the distribution of ISAEF funding is based on the 1990 U. S. Census. Students who participate in the ISAEF program are included in the student population base of AYP calculations (denominator), but because those students who receive a GED are not included in the graduation rates (numerator) of the AYP calculation, schools are penalized for success in their ISAEF programs.

Based on the information presented, the subcommittee offered two recommendations:

- 1) the use of more recent U. S. Census numbers in the funding formula; and
- 2) the request of a waiver from the U. S. Department of Education to calculate graduation rates by including high school students who earn a GED Certificate in both the numerator and denominator.

The subcommittee was also interested in additional information on how school divisions use their ISAEF funds.

GED and Adult High School Subcommittee

Subcommittee Members: Dr. Bonita M. Moore, Chair, Ms. Susan Utt,
Ms. Jacqueline Venable, Mr. Shannon Beasley,
and Ms. Debbie Bergtholdt

Ms. Utt delivered the subcommittee report in Dr. Moore's absence. She explained that the subcommittee had arranged its report according to points for discussion, points for state action, and points related to federal regulations that the Board of Education could consider.

The subcommittee report began with an explanation of how the members had expanded the subcommittee's focus to include not only the GED, but also adult high school diploma programs. The report stressed the need to support a variety of adult high school

completion programs, ESOL-to-GED transition programs, changes in the National Reporting System, and expanded online learning opportunities, as well as the need for expanded research in the field of adult education. This research could focus on overcoming barriers to access, development and testing of best practices, the impact of charging fees on learner retention and outcomes, and needs assessments of adult learner populations in Virginia.

After discussion, the committee members chose to focus on two of the subcommittee recommendations: expanding online learning opportunities for adult learners in Virginia, and supporting further research in the field.

Summary of Subcommittee Recommendations

The Advisory Committee discussed the recommendations of the four subcommittees. After questions and answers, Dr. Jones summarized the recommendations that the Advisory Committee would forward to the Board of Education. These recommendations are listed below.

1. Support the establishment of a parent-child literacy center of excellence (Early Childhood Subcommittee)
2. Support the implementation of a statewide training program for volunteer ESOL teaching assistants (ESOL Subcommittee)
3. Request a review of the formula used for ISAEP program fund distribution (ISAEP Subcommittee)
4. Request additional information on how ISAEP programs use their funds (ISAEP Subcommittee)
5. Request a waiver from the U. S. Department of Education to calculate graduation rates by including high school students who earn a GED Certificate in both numerator and denominator
6. Encourage the support of expanded online learning opportunities for adult learners in Virginia (GED and Adult High School Subcommittee)
7. Support expanded research in the field of adult education in Virginia (GED and Adult High School Subcommittee)

After a brief discussion, the Advisory Committee agreed to adopt these recommendations.

Next Steps

- The next meeting of the Advisory Committee will be held in the fall. A specific date will be announced during the summer.
- OAEL staff will develop a report of the committee's recommendations to be delivered at the Board of Education's September meeting.
- OAEL staff will inform the Advisory Committee of the recommendations being submitted to the BOE.

Dr. Jones thanked the subcommittees for their presence and work in preparing and presenting the reports to the Advisory Committee.

Adjournment